

Town Meeting Coordinating Committee

Meeting of Monday, April 18, 2011

Police Station Community Room

Attendance: Nonny Burack (departed 12:55), Peggy Roberts, Adrienne Terrizzi, Rob Crowner, Mary Streeter, Harry Brooks (arrived 11:35); absent: Carol Gray.

1. Call to order: Peggy calls the meeting to order at 11:06am.

2. Old business: Peggy urges TMCC members to attend a "focus session" at Amherst Media to help plan the future of that institution. This is relevant for TMCC because of the increasing reliance of town government on the services provided by Amherst Media for transparency and access, particularly as the importance of newspapers recedes.

The committee discusses whether it would be appropriate for Amherst Media to fundraise in the lobby of the Middle School during Town Meeting. It is not clear where authority over this space rests, though members report that the Moderator has previously denied permission to other groups who have requested it, including the Library; on the other hand, there have been groups who have engaged in fundraising seemingly without having gone through any channels to secure permission. Adrienne will convey a summary of the committee's discussion to the board of Amherst Media.

Rob suggests that following Town Meeting, TMCC convene a summit including the Moderator and possibly the Town Manager and representatives of the Select Board and the schools to formulate a policy on how access to the lobby should be apportioned and by whom, and what sorts of activities should be allowed.

3. Warrant review evaluation: Mary presents a summary of the evaluation forms turned in following the warrant review. The number of non-TMCC, non-presenters in attendance was in the upper 20's. There were fewer complaints about undue advocacy than in previous years, though there was some concern about how time for questions was handled. The agenda put together by TMCC and LWV intended for questions to be received by presenters during the time allotted to them, but in part because of time constraints, the Moderator postponed most questioning until the end of the event.

The committee discusses whether the budget should be presented in more detail at the warrant review, as some respondents would have preferred. The committee will consider holding a forum on the budget on an annual or biennial basis. Mary suggests that a document that explains how the budget article is moved, debated, and voted could be created for distribution or posting on the TMCC webpage.

The committee expresses appreciation that the Finance Committee has randomized the order of presentation of the municipal budget areas again this year.

4. Warrant review rebroadcasts: Peggy reports that rebroadcasts of the warrant review are already running on ACTV, and Mary reports that it took only four hours and a few phone calls to make this happen.

5. Bus tour: Harry reports that he can provide a portable microphone for the bus tour. The committee agrees by consensus to purchase a set of backup batteries to ensure its utility throughout the bus tour. Mary states that preliminary research that she has done indicates prices from \$100 to \$300 for portable audio systems.

Peggy states that Adrienne has agreed to serve as host of the bus tour. Peggy will print color pictures and maps for sharing at precinct meetings and on the bus tour.

Adrienne states that Wendy Blumenthal of Amherst Media has suggested taking photographs of the sites to be included in the bus tour and writing a narrative that can be broadcast in lieu of a video of the actual event. The production can also be posted on the Amherst Media and TMCC websites. Mary and

Adrienne have begun working on this idea. The bus tour subcommittee, which also includes Nonny and Rob, has met twice and will continue to refine the itinerary and script. Two potential get-off-the-bus stops have been identified (backyard chickens and water treatment plant) and several sites will be included as self-guided stops on the itinerary but not on the bus ride itself.

Publicity for the bus tour will include a flier in the second packet (Rob), announcements at precinct meetings, a slide to be run on ACTV (Mary), and a press release (Peggy).

6. Second packet: Rob presents a draft of the flier he prepared for the second packet. Peggy will deliver a color copy to the Select Board office in case the PDF that Rob will email fails again to print.

7. Precinct meetings: New member welcoming will be hosted by Rob (Monday and Saturday), Adrienne (Tuesday), and Nonny (Wednesday and Thursday). Unfortunately, there may be a conflict with Gateway public process events on Thursday and Saturday.

8. Report to Town Meeting: The committee reviews the revised draft of the oral report that Peggy has prepared for the first night of Town Meeting.

9. Precinct Meetings: No additional action since item 7.

10. Website: Mary reports that a recent email appeal yielded two or three dozen new subscribers to the TM discussion listserv.

11. Minutes of previous meetings: Mary moves (Harry seconds) and the committee approves the minutes of April 4, 2011 with amendment, by a vote of 5-0. Harry moves (Mary seconds) and the committee approves the minutes of April 11, 2011 with amendment, by a vote of 5-0.

12. New business: Peggy states that the Town Clerk has requested a meeting to review TMCC election procedures following Town Meeting.

Mary states that there should be a mechanism to provide feedback about board and committee members to the Select Board.

The committee confirms by examining the town charter that the term of a TMCC member defeated at annual town election continues through the conclusion of Spring Town Meeting even though that member is no longer a Town Meeting representative.

13. Adjournment: The meeting is adjourned at 1:13pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 25 at 2:00pm in the Romer Room at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Crowner

Documents provided:

1. agenda
2. draft minutes of April 11, 2011 meeting
3. draft of TMCC oral report to Town Meeting
4. preliminary TMCC election schedule prepared by the Town Clerk
5. summary of warrant review evaluations
6. new member orientation agenda and list of information sources